As increased student learning continues to be a focus of the district, we can’t lose sight of the fact that it goes hand-in-hand with safety and the well-being of students. One of the serious health challenges we must be prepared to address at all schools is the need for a comprehensive and coordinated approach to life threatening allergies. While you might not remember any of your classmates having a food allergy, statistics from the Center for Disease Control (CDC) show an 18% increase in food allergies from 1997 – 2007. Additionally, the CDC reports that eight different foods cause 90% of food allergies: peanuts, tree nuts, milk, eggs, wheat, soy, fish and shellfish.

Currently individual schools in the district write guideline based on the needs of their current student population. Lincoln and Orchard Hill elementary schools are “allergy sensitive” buildings, but next year they will follow the District guidelines. This spring, a group of school staff, administrators, parents and health care experts met multiple times to provide input on best district-wide practices for students with life threatening allergies. The resulting “Allergy Sensitive Environment Guidelines” limits the risk of accidental exposure to offending foods by giving best practices for school administrators, school nurses, teachers, parents, students, the food service administrator and the transportation department to minimize the risks and provide a safe educational environment for all students.

Please pay close attention to communications from your child’s school regarding rules to protect students with life threatening allergies. Families need to know that these guidelines will be in place at all district schools starting next year and will include:

* “Allergy Safe Zones” for all district schools. (This does not eliminate items being brought into the building, but it may eliminate items being brought into certain areas or classrooms. Please see District guidelines.)
* A ‘no food eating’ practice at all times during regular bus routes. (This will not apply for extracurricular events outside of the school day.)

Click HERE to view the district’s Allergy Sensitive Environment Guidelines or contact Pam Zeigler, Director of Elementary Education, for more information.